United Nations A/C.4/68/SR.20

General Assembly
Sixty-eighth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
20 January 2014

Original: English

Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 20th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 4 November 2013, at 3 p.m.

Chair: Mr. García Gonzáles ..... (El Salvador)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Address by the President of the General Assembly

1. **Mr. Ashe** (President of the General Assembly) said that the world was a few years into the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (2011-2020), which he sincerely hoped would be the final such decade. The international community had essentially reached agreement that colonialism had no place in the modern world. In 1945 when the United Nations had been established, almost a third of the world's population had lived in Territories under colonial administration. The end of the protracted process of emancipating countries that had been under colonial rule was approaching: currently, only 17 Territories with a population totalling around 2 million were officially classified as non-self-governing. Eradicating colonialism had been one of the most important tasks in the history of the United Nations, and it had come a long way.

2. United Nations peacekeeping had evolved into one of the world's main instruments to manage conflict situations and the complex crises they engendered. In order to fulfil their roles, however, the women and men who served the cause of peace in the most dangerous parts of the world needed more than well-deserved acknowledgement. They needed a more efficient system providing them with the necessary mandate, guidance, resources and training. As those issues were deliberated in the Committee and in the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, he hoped that members would remain focused on how to contribute to a better future for United Nations peacekeeping. He welcomed the fact that due consideration of the environmental impacts of peacekeeping operations had joined the protection and promotion of human rights as important components of peacekeeping mandates. An environmental policy for field missions had been adopted in 2009 and more recently, the Security Council had acknowledged that important issue in its resolution 2100 (2013) on the operations in Mali.

3. Turning to the situation in the Middle East, he said that the resumption of direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians was welcome. There had been resounding support for the two-State solution, taking into account the legitimate concerns of Israel and Palestine. But as negotiations continued, Palestine refugees were ever more vulnerable amidst new and old conflicts and must not be forgotten by the international community. With no prospect for a ready solution to their plight, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) had played a vital role in providing basic services to some five million displaced men and women. However, the Agency faced two major challenges in its work: the prevalence of conflict and scarcity of funds. He therefore appealed to donors to make additional efforts to fully fund the Agency's core budget and urged new donors to commit financially to the Agency's work.

Agenda item 54: Comprehensive review of special political missions (A/68/223)

4. **Mr. Fernández-Taranco** (Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs) said that the report of the Secretary-General on overall policy matters pertaining to special political missions (A/68/223) could be seen as a milestone, as it constituted the first review of policy issues relevant to special political missions as a whole. The report had been prepared and shaped on the basis of extensive consultations with Member States in different configurations, including meetings with all five regional groups, an interactive panel discussion and numerous bilateral meetings.

5. Although the term "special political mission" did not emerge until the 1990s, political missions had been at the very centre of United Nations efforts to maintain peace and security from the beginning, and were a direct manifestation of the principles enshrined in the Charter. Their historical record, as well as recent experience, showed that they had played an important, and often unique, role in helping countries to step back from the brink of violence and national actors to build a durable peace.

6. Country-specific missions were working in often difficult environments to support national stakeholders to navigate complex political transitions, foster national reconciliation and create inclusive governance mechanisms in the aftermath of conflict, from Somalia and Libya to Iraq and Sierra Leone. The regional offices in West Africa, Central Africa and Central Asia had served as forward platforms for preventive diplomacy and mediation, working closely with regional and subregional actors to prevent crises from escalating. The special envoys were supporting mediation and dialogue processes across the globe,

forming the most visible manifestation of the growing emphasis on preventive diplomacy.

7. From only three field-based political missions deployed in 1993, there were now 16, engaged in some of the most complex environments around the globe. There was also an increasing diversity in terms of mission design as well as mandates. Field-based special political missions had become manifestly multidimensional operations which, in addition to their political tasks, were requested to implement an expanding normative agenda in areas such as human rights, rule of law and prevention of sexual violence in conflict. The average number of mandate areas per mission had tripled from the mid-1990s to the present.

8. The report addressed a wide range of policy issues that missions faced on a day-to-day basis, from knowledge management and lessons learned to cooperation with other United Nations missions and country presences. Partnerships were a crucial aspect of the work carried out by all the special political missions. Under the framework of Chapter VIII of the Charter, field-based missions and special envoys worked closely with regional and subregional organizations to advance international peace and security, based on a shared understanding that the United Nations and regional organizations could have a multiplying effect by drawing on their respective comparative advantages.

9. The security environment in which political missions operated was another issue repeatedly raised. Over the past decade, special political missions had been deployed to increasingly volatile environments, often in active conflicts or the immediate aftermath of a war. That put great pressure on their ability to implement their mandates, and represented an everyday risk for mission personnel. The United Nations would continue to count on Member States' support to further strengthen its ability to protect the staff, thus allowing special political missions to stay and deliver.

10. Flexibility was critical, the very reason why special political missions had become a core component of the peace and security toolbox. The ability to tailor missions according to the exact needs of a particular context increased their credibility and ultimately their effectiveness.

11. National ownership was another essential component of the work of the field missions, working hand-in-hand with domestic actors to build a long-term peace. Only national actors could sustainably address the peacebuilding needs and priorities of their country, and the United Nations would continue to support them in that endeavour.

12. Enhancing coherence amongst the various United Nations actors on the ground and at Headquarters had been a key priority of the Secretary-General, and one of the main tasks carried out by the field missions. By delivering an integrated United Nations response, special political missions could further reinforce the security-development nexus. In developing and refining the important mechanism of special political missions, the United Nations had been able to diversify its toolbox for conflict prevention, peacemaking and peacebuilding, allowing for a more nimble, coherent and successful United Nations response.

13. **Mr. Selim** (Egypt), speaking on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, said that the Movement remained fully committed to supporting all efforts to enhance the effectiveness and transparency of special political missions. It attached great importance to reaching consensus among Member States on the development of policies related to those missions, and to ensuring that only ideas and approaches collectively adopted by Member States were implemented. Overall policy matters pertaining to those missions must be discussed in the General Assembly.

14. The Movement stressed the importance of clear and achievable mandates based on an objective assessment, rather than mandates that lacked a political basis or sufficient resources or were not practically achievable. That would require integrated planning to link policy formulation and implementation on the ground. Special political missions must respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all States. The Movement recalled the respective roles of the General Assembly and the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security, in accordance with the Charter, while reaffirming the principles of impartiality, consent of the parties, national ownership and national responsibility.

15. The Movement requested the Secretary-General to submit a further report on the overall policy matters pertaining to special political missions, including on efforts towards ensuring transparency, accountability, geographical balance and effectiveness in all such missions. The Secretary-General should continue

holding regular and interactive dialogues on those overall policy matters, to maintain close collaboration with Member States.

16. While taking note of the exponential increase in the financial requirements and complexity of special political missions over the past decade, the Movement drew attention to their unique characteristics in terms of establishment and financing, since they did not follow the cycle of the regular budget, despite being funded by it. In order to enhance efficiency and transparency in the budget process, the Movement therefore called for special political missions to be financed through the same criteria, methodology and mechanisms as those used to fund peacekeeping operations, including through the establishment of a new separate account for them.

17. **Mr. Sinhaseni** (Thailand), speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that preventive diplomacy and peaceful settlement of disputes had always been at the heart of the approach to conflict management in ASEAN. The Association concurred that civilian missions were an indispensable instrument in maintaining international peace and security, defusing tensions and especially building sustainable peace. The report rightly highlighted that a common thread among special political missions was their focus on promoting national ownership. While the international community had a role to play in assisting countries in transition, it was only through inclusive participation of national stakeholders that domestic conflicts could be resolved and the needs of their societies addressed in a sustainable way. Close engagement with the host Government, from the drafting of the mandate to the implementation stages, was imperative. In addition, the work of the special political missions should be tailored to local contexts and needs.

18. Transparency and accountability were crucial for the legitimacy of special political missions, especially when important decisions pertaining to them were made by a limited number of Member States privy to the process. ASEAN thus encouraged more regular and interactive consultations on the relevant overall policy matters in order to maintain close collaboration with Member States. It also urged the Secretary-General to include in his next report concrete policy recommendations to enhance the transparency and accountability of special political missions.

19. Special political missions were not a panacea for all conflicts and crises, and there was no standard formula that would guarantee success. It was imperative to articulate mission mandates clearly, with realistic, appropriate and achievable goals. The progress of the mission should be reviewed regularly and discussed with host countries, based on objective criteria and reporting requirements. The role of regional partners in advancing international peace and security was well-established in Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. Because of their proximity to the situation, understanding of the cause of conflict and knowledge of the region, regional partners cooperating with special political missions could play a critical role in preventing escalation of conflict.

20. For peace to be sustainable, security, development and respect for human rights must be mutually reinforcing. There was a need for strategic cooperation between special political missions and the wider United Nations system, particularly peacekeeping missions and United Nations country teams, to ensure that the United Nations could deliver a comprehensive and integrated response to immediate problems together with institution-building and effective initiation of a long-term development agenda.

21. **Mr. Alday** (Mexico) said that the proliferation of special political missions over the past two decades reflected the coming of age of one of the most innovative instruments at the disposal of the Security Council and the General Assembly for addressing the main challenges to maintaining international peace and security.

22. However, the evolving nature of special political missions required comprehensive analysis, in order to avoid their replication with insufficient planning and strategic vision. The comprehensive review triggered by General Assembly resolution 67/123 would allow clear identification of their limitations and a determination of whether they were adequately equipped to respond to multifarious threats to international peace and security.

23. The United Nations should not misuse special political missions under the premise that they were an innovative resource. Their authorization and deployment should be the result of an adequate diagnosis of the situation on the ground, of prior consultations with national and regional actors and of a

broad analysis comparing them with other available options. In that context, regular exchanges on general policy issues pertaining to those missions were necessary for better understanding and to promote closer collaboration among Member States, the Secretariat and all relevant parties. Based on the report of the Secretary-General, the General Assembly must continue to promote a progressive process of enhanced accountability and transparency in the establishment of special political missions and corresponding follow-up mechanisms. That would allow a clearer understanding of their mandates and prevent their proliferation from undermining the United Nations' capacity to respond promptly and efficiently to other needs.

24. **Mr. Taalas** (Finland) said that the Secretary-General's report gave an excellent overview of special political missions, convincingly demonstrating their increasing significance and complexity. It also portrayed them as a striking success story: over 50 per cent of the missions established since 1992 had been closed successfully. Custom-made special political missions, though often relatively small in size, had become a major tool in the United Nations conflict prevention and crisis management toolbox. Given the mutually reinforcing nature of peace and development, their mandates had been broadened to include preventive and peacebuilding tasks. Welcoming the recommendations in the report on how to improve the effectiveness of political missions, Finland believed that inclusive and interactive dialogue between the Secretary-General and Member States could clarify concepts and make the work of special political missions more widely appreciated.

25. Finland had always been a firm supporter of United Nations peacekeeping and over the years some 50,000 Finns had served in United Nations peacekeeping operations. Together with others, Finland had also worked to promote mediation. For example, the booklet "Guidance for Effective Mediation" offered tools for professional mediation. Perhaps something similar could be developed to enhance and strengthen the preventive work of United Nations field-based political missions.

26. Finland's policy would be driven by the view that peacekeeping and other means of crisis management such as mediation needed to complement each other and be mutually reinforcing. However, conflict prevention and resolution and peacebuilding could not be effective and lasting without full participation of women and a human rights component.

27. The increase in size and number of special political missions had led to a call for closer involvement of Member States on overall policy matters pertaining to the missions. The accumulation of experience and best practices from a wide variety of special fields provided a broad picture. There was untapped potential in special political missions that could be released by establishing a platform for sharing experiences and views. The report included many relevant issues such as coherence among United Nations as well as non-United Nations actors, comparative advantages of political missions and partnerships. There were many other-cross cutting policy issues that did not fall in the purview of the Fifth Committee, such as how the preventive role of the political missions could be advanced; when and how United Nations force protection elements should be deployed for special political missions; how knowledge of best practices should be shared; or how the opportunities offered by political missions could be better harnessed.

28. **Mr. Orellana Zabalza** (Guatemala) said that his country considered it extremely important to reach consensus among Member States on policy issues pertaining to special political missions. The ideas and approaches adopted by the Member States must in fact be implemented by the Secretariat, and mandates must be clear, verifiable and achievable, based on an objective assessment. The United Nations must not rush into adopting mandates that lacked political basis or sufficient resources or were not practically achievable.

29. All special political missions must be subject to clear rules and procedures, both when being drafted and during implementation. Those missions were an innovative tool for responding to threats to international peace and security, but it was also necessary to be aware of their limitations and costs. For that reason, the decision to deploy them rather than use other tools must be guided by considerations both of the situation on the ground and of the national actors.

30. Given the increasing frequency of those missions, it was evident that the General Assembly must play a central role in the discussion of the general policies pertaining to them. The Secretary-General should

therefore present a report on that topic, including information on the steps being taken to guarantee transparency, accountability, geographical balance and efficiency in all special political missions.

31. The exponential growth in the financial needs and complexity of the mandates of special political missions over the past ten years must be taken into account. In order to enhance efficiency and transparency of the budgetary process, special political missions should be financed through the same criteria, methodology and mechanisms used to fund peacekeeping operations, including through the establishment of a new separate account.

32. **Ms. Al-Sariaa** (Iraq) underlined that every special political mission had its particular mandate to fulfil, as set forth in the relevant Security Council resolutions. Those resolutions were to be adopted following consultations with national governments in ;which the role played by the Organization in fostering international peace and security, the independence and sovereignty of Member States and, as affirmed in the report of the Secretary-General, the principle of national ownership were all respected.

33. The relationship between the Government of Iraq and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) had been remarkable in terms of continued cooperation, coordination and support in several important areas, as demonstrated by the desire of the Iraqi Government to extend the mandate of UNAMI into 2014, subject to relevant Security Council resolutions. UNAMI had continuously provided support and advice to the Government on many issues, including the advancing of comprehensive dialogue and national reconciliation. The role played by UNAMI had been effective in bringing closer the divergent views of Iraqi political entities as they related to the electoral process. UNAMI had provided effective support to the drafting of the 2005 Constitution, in addition to helping in organizing six elections, including, most recently, by providing technical assistance prior to and during the 2013 Governorate Council elections. UNAMI had also coordinated United Nations humanitarian efforts and financial assistance from donors and had provided advice and support to the Council of Representatives. The Iraqi government hoped that the United Nations would help UNAMI in meeting the logistical requirements of providing an adequate number of monitors to guarantee the transparency of the parliamentary elections scheduled for 2014.

34. UNAMI had also facilitated dialogue between Iraq and its neighbours, legislative and judicial reforms and protection of human rights. It had helped in the establishment of the Iraqi Human Rights Committee and kept open channels of communication with different stakeholders, which had contributed to reducing political tensions. Moreover, the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees had been working closely with the Iraqi Government to mobilize humanitarian support for Syrian refugees in Iraq.

35. Iraq wished to commend efforts by UNAMI to resolve outstanding issues relating to the conflict with Kuwait, which had been crowned by an agreement for such issues to be dealt with henceforth under Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations rather than Chapter VII. The Government would continue to facilitate the work of UNAMI and remove obstacles that it faced on the ground.

36. Respect for State sovereignty would mean that a future dialogue on the agenda item pertaining to special political missions would not act as a pretext for intervention in the internal affairs of countries.

37. Some comments were in order on the Secretary-General's recommendations in his report regarding partnerships with regional and subregional organizations. It needed to be remembered that the maintenance of peace and security, including conflict prevention and resolution, remained the primary responsibility of the United Nations The consent and the view of the concerned party should be respected in consideration of any kind of partnership, especially when the special political mission was established under Chapter VI of the Charter. There should not be any duplication or impeding of the work of United Nations and any other regional or subregional organization directed towards any kind of partnership or mediation as described in the first paragraph of article 52 in Chapter VIII of the Charter. A further factor was that not all Member States belonged to a regional organization and sometimes even as members might not share its objectives. The specificity of the mandate of each special political mission should be taken into consideration, with emphasis on the need to deal with special political missions on a case-by-case basis.

38. **Mr. Khan** (Indonesia) said that the next report of the Secretary-General should include steps to build greater transparency and balanced geographical representation in the establishment of special political missions. It was important to broaden the participation of civilian expertise from countries with experience in post-conflict peacebuilding or democratic transition. Promotion of national ownership at all stages of implementing the mandates of special political missions was critical. Indonesia shared the view that the work of such missions was based on the recognition that only national actors could truly and sustainably address the needs and goals of their societies. The United Nations would succeed when the views of the parties on the ground were listened to and they felt that they had a stake in a peaceful future.

39. The United Nations, as the largest third-party mediator with its envoys, special representatives and political missions, together with its mediation infrastructure and resources, had many advantages. However, there were other governmental, regional, non-governmental and civil society entities playing a valuable role in political negotiations as well. Depending on the dynamics of the particular conflict, the opportunities for partnership between the United Nations and other relevant actors should be promoted. Regional organizations such as ASEAN and the African Union had demonstrated their strengths in peaceful resolution of local disputes, and they could play a more prominent role in advancing global peacemaking efforts as well.

40. It was important for all clusters of special political missions to operate under clear, credible and achievable mandates. Articulation of goals and purposes of the special envoys, sanctions monitoring teams and field-based missions was also essential. In that regard, and taking into account the increase in financial requirements of special political missions, Indonesia emphasized the importance of having appropriate reports on review of funding arrangements for all special political missions.

41. **Mr. Tajuri** (Libya) said that special political missions were undoubtedly one of the most important tools of the United Nations for achieving international peace and security and were the most common tool used in preventive diplomacy through mediation and good offices. The importance of special political missions was clearly demonstrated by the increase in number of such missions, currently amounting to 37 with different mandates according to the varying nature of the conflicts. Nevertheless they always had one objective: prevention of conflict and enhancement of the capacity of States to foster peace by supporting national choices of the State in which the missions were deployed while fully respecting the principle of national ownership and linking security to economic and social development, thereby bolstering the State's capacity to undertake its primary mission of protecting the interests of its citizens and providing them with necessary services. The mandates of all special political missions must be clearly defined when those missions were established and the staff of every mission must be carefully selected on the basis of its special mandate. Special political missions' interactions with peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions must also be clearly defined.

42. The United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), which had been established by Security Council resolution 2040 (2012) based on a request from the Libyan authorities to help the country in the transitional period served as an expression of international community support for the choices made by the Libyan people and their legitimate aspirations after their triumph over dictatorship, including building a democratic State based on the rule of law. UNSMIL had supported Libya's democratic transition by helping to organize the first democratic elections in Libya after more than 40 years of dictatorship, resulting in the election of the General National Congress as a constituent assembly to supervise the transition. UNSMIL had also provided technical support to Libya in the fields of transitional justice and national reconciliation, organizing many workshops in cooperation with UNDP to build capacities in the fields of the judiciary, enhancing the rule of law, security sector reform, the reintegration of revolutionaries, preventing the spread of arms as well as providing assistance in border security and the elimination of landmines that had been laid by members of the Qadhafi regime during the 2011 revolution.

43. **Mr. Sollberger** (Switzerland) said that the rise in the frequency of special political missions reflected their distinct advantages. With their comparatively small footprint and emphasis on prevention, they also generated savings in the form of reduced conflict-related costs. However, special political missions also faced many challenges in order to succeed, including the need for clear mandates, achievable goals and the

required resources. Member States should ask themselves how they could better support special political missions and enable them to fulfil their mandates.

44. Regular dialogue that was structured, results-based, interactive and thematically focused would be required in the coming years. That dialogue, which should neither divert much-needed resources from special political missions nor burden the Secretariat, should be devised as a continuous partnership between the Secretariat and the wider membership, and an opportunity to support the work of the Department of Political Affairs.

45. While the Fifth Committee was the appropriate body to be entrusted with administrative and budgetary matters, at the same time, it was difficult to separate policy matters completely from financial and budgetary aspects. Pragmatic improvements to the arrangements for funding and backstopping special political missions, such as those recommended by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, would allow for better management and generate much-needed savings.

46. Meaningful transparency in special political missions should not be limited to exchanges between the Secretariat and Member States. Most political missions were mandated by the Security Council, whose members were urged to continue improving the information provided to Member States on special political missions, in line with the Council's own recent commitments on enhancing transparency.

47. **Ms. Haile** (Eritrea) said that while the past decade had witnessed exponential growth in special political missions, it was unfortunate that an important development in the architecture of international peace and security had occurred without a much-needed policy consultation and input from the United Nations membership. It was the General Assembly that had the authority to consider and make policy recommendations on all aspects of international peace and security, as enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

48. The Secretariat would benefit from regular consultation with the Member States on policy matters pertaining to special political missions and more regular, comprehensive and systematic engagement of the Secretariat with the General Assembly. More than half a century after the establishment of the United Nations, the dream of "saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war" was still to be realized. Special political missions could make a contribution towards the realization of that dream, with the active participation of the General Assembly in reviewing the policy matters pertaining to them being an important step forward.

49. **Mr. Kim** Il-eung (Republic of Korea) said that the allocation of the new item "Comprehensive review of special political missions" to the Fourth Committee was based on the reaffirmation of the respective roles and authority of the General Assembly and the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security, in accordance with the Charter. At the same time, the Fifth Committee remained the appropriate Main Committee of the General Assembly to be responsible for administrative and budgetary matters.

50. Active cooperation of the host country was key to the success of special political missions. Enhancing the mandate of the mission or increasing its personnel alone could not be effective without the active engagement of the national authorities to restore law and order and end impunity. Special political missions were mandated primarily to support Governments as they carried out their appropriate functions. Since regional and subregional organizations often better understood the historical context and root causes of conflicts, special political missions should work closely with them to maximize their respective comparative advantages.

51. All special political missions must make protection of civilians a priority within their respective mandates, in particular by taking steps to prevent violence against women and children, especially sexual violence, and the recruitment of child soldiers. In order to prevent relapse into conflict, monitoring of implementation of sanctions measures including arms embargos was also crucial. Field-based missions as well as sanctions panels and monitoring groups should play an active role in the enhancement of on-site monitoring and the exchange of relevant information.

52. **Mr. Klein** (United States of America) said that as special political missions had evolved over the decades, they had come to play invaluable roles in preventing and resolving conflict. They helped to provide necessary capacity-building and political support for countries in transition, for instance in Libya where UNSMIL was assisting the authorities with the

development of the rule of law, strengthening human rights, helping to restore public security and supporting the first democratic elections in Libya in half a century.

53. Special political missions had to adapt to the realities on the ground. In the case of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA), the mission had adapted to the security threat posed to civilians and United Nations staff by an armed rebellion wreaking havoc on civilian communities throughout the country. The Security Council had responded by passing a resolution enhancing its capacity to move outside the capital, conduct expanded human rights monitoring and closely coordinate with an eventual African Union peacekeeping mission; it also created a United Nations guard force to ensure the safety of BINUCA staff.

54. With respect to the resolution currently under discussion in the Committee, the United States welcomed the constructive dialogue among Member States to reach a common understanding on how to increase the sharing of information on special political missions, while respecting the Security Council's primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, as set forth in the Charter. The work of the Committee should continue to avoid overlap with consideration of administrative and budgetary issues, which remained the purview of the Fifth Committee.

55. **Mr. Aguiar Patriota** (Brazil) said that special political missions involved tasks inscribed in the very heart of the United Nations functions since its inception — good offices, conflict prevention, peacemaking and peacebuilding. However, of the current 38 special political missions, it was noteworthy that only four had been created by the General Assembly.

56. Due to their growing complexity, field-based special political missions were increasingly acquiring characteristics akin to multidimensional peacekeeping operations. Thus, a thorough discussion on the nature of special political missions, as well as on their relations to peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts, was crucial. More clarity on the conceptual distinction between peacekeeping operations and special political missions would be welcomed, as it would increase the transparency of special political missions and provide solutions to concrete operational challenges facing them.

57. It was impossible to overlook the inconsistencies underlying the institutional design of special political missions. While the great majority of them were established by the Security Council, all of them were funded by the regular budget. That situation exacerbated the imbalance between decision-making by a few at the Security Council and the disproportionate dilution of costs among the many through regular budget financing. Funding of special political missions by the regular budget constituted the single most significant distortion in the United Nations budgetary process. Two special political missions alone accounted for approximately 20 per cent of the United Nations regular budget, encroaching on its other activities. In addition, with special political missions being bound by the biennial structure of the regular budget, adjusting them to the dynamic and volatile demands imposed by their mandates and operating environment became more difficult.

58. The current difficulties resulting from backstopping arrangements for special political missions needed to be addressed, as they created bureaucratic hurdles in the implementation of their mandates. Efficiency and effectiveness in the case of special political missions could best be achieved by a discussion on ways to set the financing and backstopping of those missions more clearly apart from the overall duties and obligations of the regular budget.

59. **Mr. Back** (Australia) said that the growth in the number of special political missions over the past decade alone attested to their utility and effectiveness as a critical peacekeeping, peacebuilding and state-building tool. The mandates of special political missions were more complex and multi-faceted than ever before. They provided support to countries in the areas of electoral assistance, drafting constitutions, human rights and the rule of law. They helped monitor the sanctions regimes that prevented the illegal flow of arms and the unlawful exploitation of natural resources that so often fuelled or reignited conflict. They were central to defusing tensions, helping actors step back from the brink of conflict, and supporting national efforts to build a sustainable peace. Special political missions had been at the fore of advancing the agenda on women, peace and security over the past thirteen years. They had forged strong partnerships with regional and subregional organizations to advance international peace and security.

60. However, despite the numerous successes achieved by special political missions, they also faced a host of practical, technical and financial challenges affecting their operation and overall effectiveness. There was a clear need to strengthen their ability to implement their important mandates, which required specialized expertise from different areas of the United Nations. That created an evident need for the General Assembly to find solutions to these practical challenges. The Secretary-General's report relating to the financing and backstopping of special political missions remained before the Fifth Committee, as it had for the past two years. It clearly outlined larger practical, technical and financial obstacles to fulfilment of special political missions' important mandates.

61. The challenges relating to financing and backstopping needed to be addressed as a priority. Those issues lay beyond the remit of the Fourth Committee, but it must be recognized that for special political missions to retain their flexibility and utility as a key mechanism in the United Nations peace and security toolbox, they must be given the support structures that they needed, including access to the Peacekeeping Reserve Fund, access to the strategic redeployment of equipment and supplies and access for relevant departments to the peacekeeping support account to fund their backstopping requirements.

62. **Mr. Iliichev** (Russian Federation) said that special political missions provided an effective response to crisis situations when the principle of national accountability was observed and they were oriented to the priorities of the host countries. Regional and subregional organizations could also contribute to the missions, if their approaches were consistent with those of the United Nations. The report of the Secretary-General had confirmed the diversity of the missions and their mandates; their tasks included preventive diplomacy, support for elections, coordination of donor support, national capacity-building and peacebuilding, and also efforts to counter organized crime, terrorism and the proliferation of illegal arms and ammunition.

63. The discussion concerning special political missions was still at an early stage, and it was important in further deliberations to respect the prerogatives of the principal organs of the United Nations. It would be counterproductive to overload a dialogue that had not yet begun with issues that were being discussed in other forums. With regard to the draft resolution, his delegation welcomed the sponsors' focus on an open and transparent dialogue and was confident that it would be adopted by consensus.

64. **Mr. Ishikawa** (Japan) said that the adoption of General Assembly resolution 67/123 had initiated collective efforts for thematic developments on the overall policy matters related to United Nations special political missions. The release of the Secretary-General's first report on the policy aspects of special political missions, which provided a clear and comprehensive picture of the concept of special political missions, had been another critical element. The role of special political missions had become increasingly crucial, making them one of the flagship instruments for maintenance of international peace and security, on a parallel with United Nations peacekeeping.

65. The concept behind such missions must be developed further. The approach of categorizing the current special political missions into three main clusters was very helpful, as each cluster had very different characteristics. Further, the relationship between special political missions and peacekeeping operations must be examined. Field-based special political missions had become manifestly multidimensional operations, combining political tasks with a broader set of mandates in areas such as human rights, the rule of law and sexual violence in conflict. Such trends blurred the demarcation between field-based special political missions and peacekeeping missions. The distinction needed to be clarified.

66. Current demands in the field of peace and security required a response from Member States even though there were severe fiscal constraints. The most effective approach to such a challenge was to seek the right mix of United Nations configurations for peace and security, including special political missions and peacekeeping operations, in order to employ their full comparative advantage. Regular monitoring, assessment and benchmarking could assist with timely and smooth transitions between different United Nations instruments. It would be useful to conduct an in-depth examination of that topic, taking into account the Secretary-General's recommendations relating to leveraging comparative advantages and system-wide coherence.

67. There was also a need for enhanced transparency. With many decisions on special political missions

being made internally by the Security Council, for the Member States outside the Council the process was often unclear, as were the rationale and criteria behind the decisions. The Security Council should account in greater detail for each mission's clear mandate and operation, as well as clearly explaining the timeline of each mission's activities, including drawdown, merging and closure. Additionally, Member States had fewer opportunities to know about the activities of special political missions, as compared to their knowledge of peacekeeping operations, owing to factors such as the infrequent written reports.

68. **Ms. Rivera** (El Salvador) said that United Nations special political missions around the world played a fundamental role in the restoration and maintenance of peace in different countries. By providing support to Member States in the form of good offices, conflict prevention, peacemaking and peacebuilding, they had enabled States such as El Salvador to consolidate processes that had successfully served the transition from war to peacebuilding and subsequently to development.

69. The United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) had been established to verify implementation of all the peace agreements between the Government of El Salvador and the FMLN, thereby helping to end a civil war that had lasted 12 years. As well as the ceasefire and related measures, it had supported reform and reduction of the armed forces, establishment of the Commission on the Truth, creation of a police force and reform of judicial and electoral systems, human rights and land ownership. It had also supervised the successful elections of early 1994.

70. El Salvador recognized the complexity of the conflicts that the international community was currently facing, which required a reinforced institutional collaboration between United Nations missions and the Peacebuilding Commission, the success of which was fundamental to ensuring that attention continued to be paid to post-conflict recovery. In that context, at times special political missions were deployed to address complex or apparently intractable challenges when other actors were not able or willing to engage. They were vital, even if their success was far from guaranteed.

71. While recognizing the work carried out by the various missions, El Salvador wished to express its concern with respect to the agreements in place to support and finance them. For the past ten years, the budget for the special political missions had increased to such an extent that it distorted the regular budget. Those missions constituted a considerable portion of the United Nations regular budget but the special responsibility of the permanent members of the Security Council in the maintenance of peace and security was not taken into account. It was vital for those agreements to be reviewed in order for them to be better implemented.

72. **Mr. Shearman** (United Kingdom) said that United Nations special political missions played a critical role in maintaining international peace and security around the world. They had become one of the main vehicles through which the United Nations was able to catalyze change on the ground, helping the lives of people in some of the most difficult and dangerous environments.

73. There had been some impressive results over the past year, notably in Yemen, in Somalia and Sierra Leone, where the exit of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) in March 2014 after a decade on the ground would provide a model for other special political missions in the future.

74. However, there was much to do in the years ahead. Existing missions must continue to improve their effectiveness and transparency, and new crises would require a political response. The United Kingdom was committed to improvement, and hoped that its contribution of $11 million would help to increase monitoring and oversight capacity and thus deliver further improvements on the ground.

75. The Fourth Committee had an important role to play in that regard. By discussing overall policy matters related to special political missions, the Committee could and should bring greater transparency to their work. The United Kingdom believed that dialogue would provide Member States with informal and interactive access to information on special political missions, providing an important link to the work of the wider United Nations development system on peacebuilding.

76. **Ms. Richards** (Jamaica) said that the report of the Secretary-General gave a useful record of the development of special political missions and their contribution to international peace and security. Those missions were never intended to be unending but to be

of limited duration in line with the circumstances on the ground. Special political missions and traditional peacekeeping operations differed in their roles and purposes and should be distinct in their mandates, with clear goals and reporting lines.

77. Partnership between the United Nations and international, regional or subregional organizations could be an effective means of tackling the complex tasks in conflict areas, producing a multiplying effect by drawing on their respective comparative advantages. However, while that might be the ideal situation, there were often conflicting priorities and agendas between the United Nations field presence and the host Government and/or regional organization. Mutually agreed priorities and goals, especially relating to development concerns, would go a long way towards furthering the implementation of the mandate.

78. The multidimensional nature of special political missions, resulting from the complexity of conflicts, called more than ever for an integrated approach. Tangible success could be achieved by increased partnerships among all United Nations agencies present in conflict areas, subject, however, to a prudent assessment of the functions of each agency, to prevent overlapping mandates.

79. Careful attention must also be paid to the exit strategy. Since in many circumstances, special political missions were required to play an intrinsic part in securing law and order, providing security and safeguarding human rights in post-conflict societies, if the mission was withdrawn suddenly a vacuum was often created which the local authorities might not have sufficient capacity to fill, thereby negating the gains achieved.

80. It was a matter of concern that although mandated by the Security Council, to date there had not been any reports to Member States on special political missions' performance and accountability. In addition, further consideration should be given to options for minimizing the increasing costs of special political missions. It was to be hoped that the deliberations in the Fifth Committee would yield guidelines for the work of the Fourth Committee in that area.

81. **Mr. Mamabolo** (South Africa) said that the United Nations must keep abreast of new developments and the complexity of new challenges to international peace and security, continuing to improve its capabilities in conflict prevention and resolution. The Secretary-General's report analyzed several of the special political missions of a bygone era in comparison with the current ones, covering a period of almost 60 years. During that period, however, the larger General Assembly membership unfortunately had not enjoyed the benefit of discussion of those missions. South Africa therefore welcomed General Assembly resolution 67/123, which had been instrumental in facilitating a level of transparency and inclusiveness in the consideration of the broader question of special political missions, their origins, evolution and to a limited extent their efficacy.

82. There was a need to move beyond the current limited scope of reflection on special political missions. Two major considerations stood out: first, that each mission was determined by its specificity and context; and second, that the evolution of those missions was not the product of the broader United Nations membership but the preserve of a few. At least 10 of the current 15 special political missions were located in Africa, and similarly, consideration of the agenda of the Security Council revealed that the majority of the items related to Africa. While there were indeed numerous issues of peace and security that pertained to Africa, the composition of the Security Council which decided on those mandates did not comprise a single permanent member from Africa. While espousing the value of special political missions as a tool for managing conflict, after almost 70 years the United Nations still excluded key voices of the regions most affected by conflict and instability from playing a significant role in resolving them. Similarly, the sanctions monitoring teams, panels and other groups had consistently suffered from a dearth of expertise from the global South.

83. It was of course encouraging that a newly-appointed Special Envoy to the Great Lakes Region had recently been deployed as the first female chief United Nations mediator. South Africa had always advocated an increased role for women at the negotiating table, as it had learned from its own history that women had a significant role to play. South Africa commended Security Council resolution 2122 (2013) that sought to promote a greater role for women in conflict resolution, mediation and conflict management.

84. While special political missions were a positive development in establishing a sustainable peace, it must be acknowledged that the wider United Nations

system, the Peacebuilding Commission and the United Nations country teams, among other stakeholders, also had their own resources and experiences to contribute. An integrated approach that optimally utilized the collective United Nations presence on the ground could contribute to a lasting and sustainable solution to conflicts, if managed correctly.

The meeting rose at 5:25 p.m.